

“Serving Those Who Served”

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Vol. 4 Issue 15

SPRING 2003

IN TODAY'S ISSUE



***Remembering Two of
Washington's Best
Brownie Braunsteiner and
Fran Agnes
featured on page 3***



***March is American
Red Cross Month
Honoring More Than
150 Years of Service.
see IN FOCUS page 7***

Calendar of Events

| | |
|-------------|---|
| May 1 | Loyalty Day |
| May 17 | Armed Forces Day |
| May 26 | Memorial Day Observed |
| June 4-7 | DAV Convention - Yakima |
| June 6-8 | Marine Corps League Convention - Vancouver |
| June 14 | Flag Day |
| June 19-21 | VFW Convention - Yakima |
| July 15 -20 | American Legion Convention - Spokane |
| July 27 | Korean War Armistice Ceremony - Ft. Lewis |

***Homeless Women Veterans
Helped with Grant Monies***



**By Barb
Logan,
HWVRP
Coordinator**

The WA State Department of Veterans Affairs was awarded a nearly \$250,000 grant from the US Department of Labor to fund the Homeless Women Veterans Reintegration Project (HWVRP) in the Puget Sound region. The funds are to be used to help homeless women veterans find employment and housing. The project coordinators work in coordination with the WA State Employment Security Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER's) and Disabled Veterans Outreach Providers (DVOP's), the Puget Sound Healthcare System at American Lake and Seattle with the Homeless Women Veterans Programs, and the Veterans Independent Enterprises of Washington (V.I.E.W.) in Fife.

The HWVRP can provide assistance with employment needs (some types of training, certifications, tools needed for certain kinds of employment, clothing, etc.). Assistance can also be provided for help with housing needs (rent, screening fees) child care, food, and medical care. Many women veterans are unsure of

their VA entitlements and we also offer assistance in applying for service-connected (and non service-connected) disability benefits from the federal VA which includes upgrading current disability benefits.

Just one example of a success story from our program is a homeless woman veteran who went to the local Job Service Center

***“We were able to
help her pay rent,
get emergency
dental work and
food for her and
her two children.”***

looking for employment and was talking to the DVOP who mentioned our program – he had no idea that she was homeless. The veteran told the DVOP that she was indeed homeless and had been living in her mother's vehicle with her two children. After contacting us, we were able to help her with the following: we purchased her gaming license so she could work at a new casino as a Security Manager; we were able to pay for a few months rent while she was looking for a job and while she got on her feet after getting a job; we helped her with an

emergency dental problem; and we were able to provide money for food.

Another success story comes from a veteran who needed permanent housing but was already employed with UPS. This was when the longshoremen were on strike and she was not getting the hours needed to pay for her rent. We helped her get into permanent housing and then a few months later, she called and said that she was on medical leave from her job due to her Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. We were able to help her with her rent, utilities, and food for a few months until she was able to go back to work. She also has a claim into the VA for service-connection of her PTSD.

We would like to get the word out to people to please remember to ask any homeless women that they come across if they served in the US military so they don't "fall through the cracks" and miss out on some possible services available to them.

For more information contact:
Pat Johnson 206/205-5619 for veterans in King and Snohomish counties.
Barbara Logan 1-800-562-2308 for veterans in Thurston, Pierce and Kitsap counties.

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Washington State
Dept of Veterans Affairs
PO Box 41150
1011 Plum St, 2nd Floor
Olympia, WA 98504-1150

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Director's Message

VeteranVoices

Veteran Voices is published for Washington state veterans and their family members, WDVA employees and Veterans Home residents.

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Governor
Gary Locke

WDVA Director
John M. King

Public Relations & Legislative Manager
Heidi Audette

Public Information Officer
Colleen Gilbert

Graphic Designer
Miriam Young

Call 1-877-VETS-R-US
(877-838-7787) for an application to the veterans homes.



Publication Information

Please submit comments, articles and address changes electronically to:
colleen@dva.wa.gov
(360) 725-2180 or
miriam@dva.wa.gov
(360) 725-2169
or mail to:
Veteran Voices
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Our state, like many others, is facing a financial crisis that will change the way our government provides services. The era of "trimming back" or "tightening our belts" has ended and the reality that government cannot continue business as usual is upon us.

Right now, the Washington State Legislature is grappling with a \$2 billion hole in the state's budget. New phrases such as the Priorities of Government or "POG" have focused lawmakers, and those who elected them, on where to spend the dollars that remain.

While WDVA provides critical services under the POG criteria of "Improve security of Washington's vulnerable children and adults", the agency, like all others, is not immune from cuts. The current proposals would cut more than \$2 million from the agency's biennial budget.

At the same time, many legislators are reexamining how to ensure state agencies spend the money allotted to them wisely, efficiently and with proven accountability measures and results. This year close to a dozen bills were introduced, each with the goal of holding agencies to heightened standards of accountability and providing higher

levels of oversight and monitoring.

I have been in the state government arena throughout my 28-year career. I have seen agencies perform at the highest standards, the lowest standards, and everything in between. Without a doubt, WDVA staff members provide the highest quality of care and service to this deserving group of Washington citizens, and they do it efficiently. Here are some examples:

◆ Over the past several years, the Washington State Veterans Homes have maintained extremely high levels of care for nursing home residents, satisfying Medicaid and U.S. DVA regulations. In several cases, the homes have been citation-free, a level of accountability rarely achieved by any nursing home.

◆ Likewise, the Veterans Field Services division developed a network of service providers and has developed internal measures to ensure veterans are served with knowledgeable staff and/or referrals to appropriate services. For three years, a network of state employed and contracted service officers has managed claims and caseloads using a "batting average". This average provides a picture of the service officer's work, including the number of claims completed, adjudicated, and awarded.

Striving toward greater efficiency in claims services is not only the right thing to do for veterans, it also benefits the veteran's community. A veteran receiving U.S. DVA Compensation and Pension (C&P) and health care often has a decreased reliance on other social services and an increased ability to spend income contributing to the local economy.

Across the state, veterans receive assistance with C&P claims through a network of state employed or contracted

service officers. This network has proven to be successful at ensuring our state's veterans have access to federal entitlements. One indicator of the network's success is a comparison of the percent of veterans receiving benefits. Nationally, 9.6% of a state's veterans are in receipt of C&P. In Washington, over 12.5% of the state's veterans receive C&P, due in large part to the highly functional network of outreach and claims management services.

Should targeted budget reductions be enacted by the legislature in the coming months, this network of providers, and their continued commitment to provide outstanding service, will play a larger role in serving veterans.

Our collective debt to those who sacrificed so much can only be satisfied through continued cooperation among all partners and improved individual performance and professionalism. Although, budget challenges will continue to be part of Washington State's economic climate for the next several biennia, the groundwork for providing services in this era of accountability has been laid.

Much like the national call for faith based organizations to pick up where governmental programs fall short, the veterans' community continues to cultivate their networks to ensure no one is left behind. Our collective efforts to provide even higher levels of service through established networks, and to continue promoting volunteerism and other avenues for service will keep Washington State at the forefront of "Serving Those Who Served".



WA State Legislative Update

The Washington State Legislature is in the middle of the 2003 Legislative Session. While many bills have been introduced, the number that has progressed past critical cut-off points is much smaller. A list of several veteran related bills is below. If you would like additional information or an update on the status of a bill, check the web site at www.dva.wa.gov, e-mail or call Heidi Audette at: heidia@dva.wa.gov or (360) 725-2154.

HB 1228 / SB 5273 Veterans Employment Exams – Removes the restriction that veterans must claim scoring preference on civil service exams within 15 years of release from active military service.

STATUS: HB 1228 – 3/6 Passed House, Referred to Senate Govt Operations & Elections
SB 5273 – 3/16 Passed Senate

HB 2089 Veterans' Tuition Waivers
Institutions of higher education may waive all or a portion of tuition and fees for: An eligible veteran totally disabled in the line of duty; The children and spouse of an eligible veteran totally disabled in the line of duty; and The children and surviving spouse of an eligible veteran killed in the line of duty, or who is listed as missing in action or a prisoner of war.

STATUS: 3/14 House 2nd Reading

HJM 4010/SJM 8008 Veterans' Retirement
Requests to members of Congress and the President that disabled retired veterans receive retirement pay as well as disability compensation.

STATUS: HJM 4010 - 3/11 Passed House, Referred to Senate Govt Operations & Elections
SJM 8008 – 3/7 Passed Senate, Referred to House State Government

SB 5358 School Diplomas for Veterans
Local school districts may issue high school diplomas to honorably discharged veterans of the Korean conflict who were scheduled to graduate from high school in the years 1940 through 1955 but were unable to graduate due to service in the Korean conflict.

STATUS: 3/6 Passed Senate, Referred to House Education

SB 5666 Defining Veteran – Adds U.S. documented merchant mariners, with service aboard vessels operated by the DOD during defined dates of the Korean or Vietnam conflicts, to the definition of veteran in Washington State.

STATUS: 3/14 Senate 2nd Reading Calendar

SB 5861 Impersonation of a Veteran
Criminal impersonation in the first degree includes the additional situation of falsely assuming the identity of active or retired military personnel with intent to defraud for personal gain or to facilitate any unlawful activity.

STATUS: 3/16 Passed Senate

VAAC Mourns Loss of Esteemed Members

The Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee and the Department of Veterans Affairs started the year off on a somber note, as they said final farewells to two of their members, Brownie Braunsteiner and Fran Agnes.

"The contributions that each of these men made in the lives of veterans, both here in Washington and nationwide, are immeasurable," said WDVA director John King.

"They touched the lives of everyone who knew them," King said, "and their hard work and dedication impacted thousands.

"They will always be remembered as true heroes."

"And in the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years."

—Abraham Lincoln



1st Sgt. Helmut "Brownie" Braunsteiner, USA (ret) – March 20, 1927 – December 29, 2002

Born in Vienna, Austria in 1926, Brownie's family immigrated to the United States in 1939, fleeing Nazi control of his homeland.

A 27-year military career began in 1944, when at the age of 17, he joined the U.S. Army, serving as an interpreter-translator because of his fluency in German. This led to being a part of the interrogation of alleged war criminals at Camp Sibert, at Oberursel Germany in preparation for the Nuremberg War Crimes Trial

in 1945-46. There Brownie reviewed and translated Nazi & SS documents captured by U.S. Forces at Offenbach, Germany and prepared documents for the trial. He then participated at the trial as an interpreter/translator, and later used the same skills to serve President John F. Kennedy and Attorney General Robert Kennedy on visits to Berlin, Germany.

1st Sgt. Braunsteiner was awarded the following during his military career: Bronze Star, Purple Heart (2), Combat Infantry Badge (2nd award), 2 Presidential Unit Citations, 2 Armed Forces Expeditionary Medals (Korea and Berlin), Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, European Theater (2 battle stars), Southeast Asian Theater (2 battle stars), American Defense Service Medal, Victory Medal, Good Conduct Medal (6 loops), and 2 Department of the Army Commendation Medals.

Brownie's next 30 years were spent serving his country as a volunteer. The list is long: Diabetes Association of Pierce County, VFW, Pierce County Veterans Advisory Council, Bates Technical College General Advisory Council, Veterans Independent Enterprises of Washington, Tacoma Mayor's Veterans Task Force, Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee, Veterans Legislative Coalition, Fort Lewis Retiree Council, Puget Sound Works, Pacific Northwest StandDown, Tacoma Veterans Center, St. Joseph Hospital Diabetes Center, Washington State World War II Memorial Committee. This is a partial list. The awards for his "civilian" endeavors cover a full page.

In 2001, the Bates Foundation established the Brownie Braunsteiner Veterans' Scholarship Fund, in recognition of Brownie's many contributions to Bates.

When diagnosed with terminal lung cancer two years ago, Brownie told TNT reporter Art Popham, "I'll stop when I drop."

Not true, Brownie. You touched so many during your lifetime and your legacies will live on.



Capt. Francis W. Agnes USAF (ret) April 28, 1922 – February 9, 2003

Born in Haynes, N.D. in 1922, Fran's family moved to Wenatchee, WA in 1936, where he spent his high school years playing baseball, graduating from Wenatchee High School in 1940.

Shortly after graduation, Fran joined the U.S. Army Air Corps, beginning a 22-year military career. While serving in the Philippines, he was captured and endured the Bataan Death March, turning 20 years-old while on the 70 mile forced walk to Camp O'Donnell. The next 3 ½ years took him from POW camps in the Philippines to working as slave labor at Seitetsu Steel in Hiro Hata, 30 miles from Hiroshima, where he witnessed the explosion of the atomic bomb.

Returning home after WWII, Fran re-enlisted in what later became the U.S. Air Force, retiring in 1961.

His next 25 years were spent with the Washington State Job Service where he retired as Operations Manager in 1987. During that time, his advocacy and love of baseball was instrumental in bringing National League Junior Baseball to Spokane as well as being a driving force in the development of many baseball fields throughout the area.

The next 15 years were dedicated to serving veterans. From 1990-1991, he served as the National Commander of the American Ex-Prisoners of War, and became a member of the Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee in 1994, serving as chairman in 1998/99. In addition, Fran was active in the Everett Elks, the Wenatchee Eagles, the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Disabled American Veterans, as well as serving on the Snohomish County Human Services Veterans Assistance Board, the Washington State World War II Memorial Committee, and as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Veterans Legislative Coalition.

The project Fran may best be remembered for is the Tahoma National Cemetery. Many thought his leadership was the catalyst that brought the cemetery from inception to dedication in Sept. 1997. He then continued to serve veterans as the chair of the Tahoma National Cemetery Support Group.

Throughout all of this, he worked on and supported measures and legislation that would help veterans get disability payments and guarantee a color guard at veterans' funerals.

Fran's legacies are many, and continue even in his absence. Senator Patty Murray introduced bill S517 in the U.S. Senate on March 5, 2003, entitled the Francis W. Agnes Prisoner of War Benefits Act of 2003. The bill, which would amend title 38 of the United State Code, to provide improved benefits for veterans who are former prisoners of war, has been referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.



National Notes



VA Urges “Thank You” Signatures

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi has urged Americans to sign a special “Thank You Note” to the men and women of the U.S. military. The note is available on the Internet at a site — www.defendamerica.mil — maintained by the Department of Defense. About 4.5 million Americans have already visited the DoD web-site on the Internet, where they signed a simple message: “Dear member of the U.S. military: Thank you for defending our freedom.”

Source: U.S. DVA News Release – February 13, 2003

Military Life Insurance Premiums Reduced

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will reduce Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance (SGLI) premiums, beginning in July 2003.

The new monthly rate will be 6.5 cents for every \$1,000 of coverage, about 19 percent less than the current 8 cents. Monthly premiums for the maximum coverage of \$250,000 will fall to \$16.25 from the current \$20.

In addition to the basic SGLI, family coverage is available for spouses and children of servicemembers holding SGLI policies. Spouses pay age-based premiums for up to \$100,000 coverage, while children receive \$10,000 of free coverage. The reduction for spousal policies will vary among age groups, with the largest decline – 42 percent – affecting those 35 to 39.

The reductions do not affect Veterans’ Group Life Insurance (VGLI) rates, which VA reduced 3 times in the last four years. Servicemembers become eligible for VGLI only after they leave the military.

For more information about VA administered life insurance programs, call 1-800-419-1473, or visit www.insurance.va.gov/ on the Web.

Source: U.S. DVA News Release – January 24, 2003

VA To Grant Benefits To More Vietnam Veterans

A recent decision to extend benefits to Vietnam veterans with chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) means that veterans with CLL who served in Vietnam during the Vietnam War don’t have to prove that illness is related to their military service to qualify for Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation. Additionally, for more than 20 years, VA has offered special access to medical care to Vietnam veterans with any health problems that may have resulted from Agent Orange exposure, and this decision will ensure higher-priority access to care in the future.

The decision to provide compensation was based upon a recent report by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) that found among scientific studies “sufficient evidence of an association” between exposure to herbicides during the Vietnam War and CLL.

VA requested the IOM panel of experts to focus on CLL in their report because of veterans’ concerns that CLL shares some similarities with non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, which the IOM had previously connected to Agent Orange exposure.

Secretary Principi ordered the development of regulations to enable VA to begin paying compensation benefits once a final rule takes effect. Publication of that regulation is expected in the near future and can be viewed at www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/benefits/herbicide/.

In the meantime, veterans with questions about health-care, compensation and survivor benefits may call a toll-free help line at 1-800-749-8387 for information.

Source: U.S. DVA News Release – January 23, 2003

VA, HUD, HHS Join in Homeless Initiative

In an unprecedented collaboration, the Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Health and Human Services (HHS) and Veterans Affairs (VA) are launching a \$35 million program to provide permanent housing, health care and other supportive services to those experiencing chronic or long-term homelessness.

This unique funding will include \$20 million from HUD, \$10 million from HHS and \$5 million from VA and is designed to improve the delivery of federal resources that address the special housing and service needs of this population of homeless persons – many of whom have mental illness, drug/alcohol addiction and/or physical disabilities.

The notification of funding availability (NOFA) is a critical component in addressing the needs of chronically homeless persons and will draw upon innovative local programs that promote a “housing first” approach to responding to homelessness. Research confirms that approximately 10 percent of the nation’s homeless are so-called chronically homeless -

often suffering from mental illness or addiction. Though a fraction of the overall homeless population, these long-term homeless persons account for approximately half of all the resources dedicated to meet the needs of the entire homeless population.

Background on the Interagency Council

Congress established the Interagency Council in 1987 with the passage of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. Over the past six years, however, the Council was relatively dormant. Last year, President Bush reactivated the Interagency Council to better coordinate the activities of 18 federal agencies that are involved in assisting the homeless and to create the strategies to reduce and end homelessness. In addition, HUD, HHS and VA formed a joint task force to study and improve the way these agencies respond to the various needs of homeless individuals and families.

Visit the following websites for more information www.ich.gov/, www.hud.gov/, www.hhs.gov/, www.va.gov/.

Source: U.S. DVA News Release – January 27, 2003

New CHAMPVA Policy to Benefit Surviving Spouses

WASHINGTON - A new law will reinstate health care benefits for some surviving spouses covered by the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) if they apply by Feb. 4, 2004.

“I am pleased that we can now provide health care benefits to some veterans’ widows or widowers who remarry and, in doing so, bring them peace of mind. These older CHAMPVA beneficiaries lost their coverage in the past,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi.

The surviving husband or wife who lost access to CHAMPVA benefits by remarrying before Feb. 4, 2003, can be reinstated into the program if they remarried after becoming age 55 and if they apply for reinstatement by Feb. 4, 2004.

Similarly, a surviving spouse who remarried after becoming age 55 and lost access to TRICARE benefits may now be eligible for CHAMPVA coverage.

To be eligible for CHAMPVA, people must be family members of veterans who have a permanent and total service-connected disability, who died of a service-connected condition or who were totally disabled from a service-connected condition at the time of death. In general, CHAMPVA covers most health care services and supplies that are medically and psychologically necessary.

People who want an application for this benefit or more information can contact VA’s Health Administration Center at 800-733-8387. Surviving spouses who remarry at a younger age and lose their CHAMPVA benefits can have these benefits restored if their later marriage is annulled or ends due to death or divorce. Similarly, widows or widowers of any age who lost benefits under VA’s Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) program due to remarriage are eligible for reinstatement of monthly DIC payments if their subsequent marriage ends.

This restoration policy has been in effect since 1998, but VA officials are concerned widows or widowers may overlook this benefit if a subsequent marriage ends years later. VA’s average payment to surviving spouses is about \$12,000, including adjustments for minor children, survivors who are housebound or who need a home aide, and other factors.

Source: U.S. DVA News Release, March 12, 2003

AIDS Researcher Wins VA’s Middleton Award

Dr. Douglas D. Richman, a virologist at the San Diego Healthcare System of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), whose research on HIV and AIDS has helped guide treatment for millions of patients worldwide, will receive the 2002 Middleton Award, VA’s highest honor for biomedical investigators.

Richman, director of the Research Center for AIDS and HIV Infection at the San Diego VA and the Center for AIDS Research at the University of California, San Diego, is noted for his studies of zidovudine, or azidothymidine (AZT), the first drug approved in the United States to treat HIV. He and colleagues established the effectiveness of the drug in clinical trials in the late 1980s. Later studies by Richman revealed the emergence of AZT-resistant strains of HIV. The appreciation of the importance of HIV drug resistance and his pioneering studies of combination therapy led to the development in the 1990s of highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART).

Today, Richman continues to play a major role in setting the national agenda for AIDS research and care. Recent research by Richman showed that more than three-quarters of HIV patients in the United States with a measurable viral load carry strains of the virus that are resistant to drug therapy. The study underscored the need for drug resistance testing, which helps identify which medications will be effective for a patient. Richman has also shown that HAART does not completely eradicate HIV, but leaves small reservoirs of HIV in immune cells—even when blood tests show no trace of the virus.

Amid these findings, Richman is in the forefront of efforts to study neutralizing antibody to HIV, which may be of particular importance in the development of an AIDS vaccine.

VA established the Middleton Award in 1960 to honor William S. Middleton, MD, an educator and physician-scientist who served as VA’s chief medical director from 1955 to 1963. The award is given each year to a senior VA investigator for major achievements in areas of prime importance to VA’s research mission.

Source: U.S. DVA News Release – February 3, 2003

VA’s Proposed Budget for FY 2004 — A Statement by Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi

The President’s recent budget request for \$63.6 billion for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) demonstrates the administration’s commitment to this nation’s veterans. This fiscal year 2004 budget request for VA represents the greatest percentage increase for any department in government.

The budget proposal — \$30.2 billion in discretionary funding (mostly for health care) and \$33.4 billion for VA-administered entitlement programs (mostly disability compensation and pensions) – reinforces VA’s commitment to serve the highest priority vets, those with service-connected disabilities, low-income veterans and veterans with special medical needs, such as spinal cord injuries, blindness and amputations. The President’s budget will increase the number of these higher priority veterans in VA care by 169,000 in FY 2004.

Source: U.S. DVA News Release – February 4, 2003

Improving Health Care for American Indian Veterans

Rural American Indians and Alaska Natives who served in the military will receive enhanced medical care as a result of a new agreement by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Health and Human Services. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi and Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy G. Thompson today announced a formal agreement that will encourage cooperation and resource sharing between the two agencies to make sure veterans who are American Indians or Alaska Natives receive quality health care. VA Deputy Secretary Dr. Leo S. Mackay Jr. and HHS Deputy Secretary Claude A. Allen formally signed the memorandum of understanding today at the National Congress of American Indians Executive Council’s winter session in Washington, D.C. In addition, the agreement between VA and HHS will improve communication between the agencies and tribal governments and create opportunities to develop strategies for sharing information and information technology. The technology sharing will include VA’s electronic medical record system, bar code medication administration and telemedicine. VA and IHS will co-sponsor continuing medical training for their health care staffs. VA operates the largest integrated health care system in the United States, providing a broad spectrum of medical, surgical and rehabilitative care for veterans. Nearly 4.3 million veterans received care in VA health care facilities in 2002. The mission of the Indian Health Service, an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services, is to raise the physical, mental and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest levels. The IHS operates a comprehensive health service delivery system for approximately 1.6 million members of federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes.

Source: U.S. DVA News Release - February 25, 2003



FEDERAL LEGISLATION

Retention of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation for Surviving Spouses Remarrying After Age 55 S.249 & H.R. 36

Provides that remarriage of the surviving spouse of a deceased veteran after age 55 shall not result in termination of dependency and indemnity compensation otherwise payable to that surviving spouse.

STATUS S. 249: 01/30/2003: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

STATUS H.R. 36: 02/20/2003: Referred to the Subcommittee on Benefits.

Fairness to All Fallen Vietnam War Service Members Act of 2003 S.296

Directs the Secretary of Defense to study and report to Congress: (1) to identify veterans who died after October 31, 1955, as a result of military operations in southeast Asia whose names are not eligible for inscription on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial; and (2) on the feasibility and equitability of revising the eligibility requirements to be more inclusive of such veterans or of creating an alternative means for recognizing them.

STATUS: 02/04/2003: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Survivor Benefits Plan (SBP) Improvement Act of 2003 S. 451

Increasing the minimum Survivor Benefit Plan basic annuity for surviving spouses age 62 and older, to provide for a one-year open season under that plan, and for other purposes.

STATUS: 2/26/2003: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

Veterans Comprehensive Hepatitis C Health Care Act H.R.73

Directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, during the first year after the enactment of this Act, to provide a blood test for the Hepatitis C virus to: (1) each Vietnam Era veteran who is enrolled to receive veterans’ medical care and requests such care or is otherwise receiving a physical examination or any other care or treatment from the Secretary; and (2) any other veteran who requests such test. Requires the Secretary to provide followup tests and appropriate treatment for any veteran who tests positive. Prohibits a copayment from being charged for such treatment.

STATUS: 02/20/2003: Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.

Francis W. Agnes Prisoner of War Benefits Act of 2003 S.517

A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide improved benefits for veterans who are former prisoners of war.

STATUS: 3/5/2003 Referred to Senate committee. Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

American Red Cross

Supporting

The American Red Cross keeps families in touch, around the clock and around the world, providing the following services:

- + Emergency Communication – In the event of an emergency, critical accident, illness or death of a service member’s family, don’t hesitate to contact the Red Cross.
- + Health and Welfare Inquires – Regular communication between service members and their families is not normally a problem, but sometimes a long time with no word can become worrisome. The Red Cross can help.
- + Prevent, Prepare for, and Cope with Emergencies – The Red Cross can help with immediate personal and family problems associated with moves and separations of military life.
- + Humanitarian Reassignment of Hardship discharge – The Red Cross can help explain procedures when a request for a humanitarian reassignment closer to home or a hardship discharge needs to be made to military authorities.
- + Emergency Financial Assistance – The Red Cross may be able to help with emergency expenses arising from the need for a service member or family member to be present, depending on individual circumstances.
- + Information, Referral, Advocacy – When service members or their families don’t know where to turn for health and supportive services, the Red Cross can help identify and understand government benefits.

To find out more about The American Red Cross, go to <http://www.redcross.org/> or check phone directory for local Red Cross office.



March is...

American Red Cross Month

- Honoring More Than 150 Years of Service

In March, 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt used the first Red Cross Proclamation as a call to action for all Americans: “I summon the men, women and young people of our country, in every city and town and village, in very county and state throughout the land, to enlist in the army of mercy mobilized under the banner of the Red Cross and to contribute generously to the Red Cross War Fund.”

On February 28, 2003, President George W. Bush signed a proclamation declaring March 2003 as Red Cross Month, stating “...the Red Cross is a vital partner with the Department of Homeland Security in empowering individuals and families to protect themselves and be prepared for the unexpected.”

For More Than 50 Years... Still Wondering

WAR DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON

MAR 2 0 1942

Mr. Norman H. Davis, Chairman,
American National Red Cross,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Davis:

United States military authorities in Great Britain have requested the Red Cross to establish clubs in certain cities in that area with a view to providing, as circumstances dictate sleeping accommodations and meals in addition to the usual recreational facilities. The provision of food and lodging for enlisted personnel while on furlough, and at prices within their means, is a most important recreational facility, as many soldiers cannot otherwise avail themselves of leave privileges. Red Cross officials appear to be reluctant to provide these accommodations, except on a basis of no charge to service men; unless specifically requested by the Commanding General in that area to provide them at some cost to the recipients.

The War Department appreciates the motive of the Red Cross with respect to this matter and its established policy of free service, but under the circumstances it is believed impractical, unnecessary, and undesirable that food and lodging be furnished free. It is understood that all similar allied clubs in the British Isles make suitable charges for this particular service. It is believed advisable that American soldiers be required to pay at least the actual cost of meals and lodging furnished for their convenience and benefit while on furlough. Such procedure is considered a sound business arrangement and conforms to local practice. It is therefore believed that such procedure should be adopted because of its merit rather than because the local military commander requests that charges be made for the proposed services.

The War Department recommends that the Red Cross authorities in the British Isles be authorized to provide these services at such cost as they deem appropriate.

Sincerely yours,

Henry L. Stimson
Secretary of War

Dear Veteran,

2003

Thank you for your inquiry about American Red Cross actions during World War II. Judging by the mail we receive regarding the selling of food and other items during World War II, we will probably never live down the issue. It is also very difficult to bring to trial events that happened aver 50 years ago.

Our policy regarding the selling of refreshments in rear areas frequented by the Allies was not a decision we made ourselves. Henry Stimson, the then Secretary of the War Department strongly suggested the American Red Cross to charge for certain services in certain rear areas to bring our Red Cross services more in line with the British Red Cross, which at that time could not afford to provide free services to its own troops. (Frontline operations were excluded and everything was free at the front.) Although the American Red Cross is not a government agency, we chose to comply with the order to avoid morale problems among the Allies at a critical time in our nation's history.

We would like to make peace with those offended by our actions in WWII and invite you to consider the good work the Red Cross did for the troops overseas. More than 28 million lifesaving prisoner-of-war packages were shipped to camps in Europe and the Pacific. Over 13 million units of blood were collected and processed for plasma and transfusion purposes. The Red Cross sent 42 million emergency messages between service personnel and their families. Assistance also way given to 75 million civilian war victims between 1939 and 1946.

The American Red Cross has been equally busy since WWII. During the Korean and Vietnam Wars, we distinguished ourselves, providing emergency and recreational services to the troops, all free. (We also were the primary source of blood plasma in the Korean War.) And during the Gulf War, we delivered over 200,000 emergency messages between soldiers and their loved ones. At home in just the last year, we fed, sheltered & gave a new start to victims of over 68,000 disasters in the U.S. and its territories. In the area of health and safety courses, we trained nearly 12,000,000 people in CPR, Fast Aid and Water Safety. In addition, we collected nearly 6 million units of lifesaving blood for patients in hospitals across the United Stares.

As an organization chartered by Congress, we work hard at improving our services as millions of people continue to turn to us for help each year. The assistance they receive is mainly from volunteers, people like you and me. While the American Red Cross cannot undo past mistakes, it continues to carry on its proud 115-year tradition of people helping people.

Thank you for sharing your concerns and comments with us.

Sincerely,

Patrick F. Gilbo, Manager
Public Inquiry Center/Historical Resources

Red Cross/USO

Our Troops



USO Programs and Services

USO Centers around the world continue to strive for new and improved centers, programs and services to enhance the quality of life for service men and women and their families. Below are just a few ways that the USO is contributing.

Mobile Canteens: Bring morale-building services to a highly expeditionary military force and assure that a USO will always be close by. Vehicles are equipped with refreshments, books, writing materials, board games, stereo, TV and a mini-stage for impromptu live performances.

Crisis Response: When the men and women of our Armed Forces are deployed around the world, the USO is "in the trenches" with them immediately, providing temporary USO centers, cellular telephones, computer and email access and special entertainment. During times of conflict or peacekeeping, the USO is alongside today's expeditionary military.

Family and Community Centers: Help military families adjust to their new surroundings during personnel transfers to unfamiliar countries, and offer support to families separated by deployments. They

provide cybercanteens with e-mail access, cultural classes, holiday celebrations, child care, support groups, family crisis counseling, game rooms, TVs and stereos.

Airport Centers: Assist American military families and unaccompanied personnel on the move. Travelers can receive assistance with language translations, currency conversions and research for transportation options. Most have nursery facilities for parents with infants.

Fleet Support Centers: Operate at ports-of-call offering U.S. Navy and Marine personnel respite from long periods of sea duty. They provide wholesome local leisure activities, currency conversions, language translations, local maps, and information about temporary living quarters.

Celebrity Entertainment Tours: Bring love and laughter to troops stationed far away from their loved ones. Well-known entertainers volunteer their time to perform morale-boosting shows for U.S. military personnel stationed overseas; the USO is responsible for all other expenses, including transportation, lodging and logistical support.



USO FACTS

1940 - President Franklin Delano Roosevelt challenged six private organizations—the YMCA, YWCA, National Catholic Community Service, the National Jewish Welfare Board, the Traveler's Aid Association and the Salvation Army—to handle the on-leave recreation needs for the members of the Armed Forces. The six organizations pooled their resources and the United Service Organizations—which quickly became known as the USO—was incorporated in New York State on February 4, 1941. By 1944, USOs were found in over 3,000 locations throughout the United States primarily staffed by the USO's most precious resource, volunteers. President Roosevelt became the first USO Honorary Chairman, a position accepted by every President who followed.

2003 - Over 12,000 members in the USO international corps of volunteers provide an estimated 450,000 hours of service annually, a worldwide personal contribution of over \$3 million.



USO OF THE PUGET SOUND AREA, INC.

On July 11, 1966, the Admiral James S. Russell USO Center was established at Sea-Tac International Airport. The USO at McChord Air Force Base opened on November 11, 1984. For more than thirty-five years, USO Puget Sound Area's dedicated volunteers, working around the clock, have assisted over three million members of America's traveling military and their families.

To learn more about supporting your local USO:

www.usopsa.org

Sea-Tac International Airport Military Lounge Terminal, 2nd Floor
Seattle, Washington 98158

Phone: 206/246-1908 Sea-Tac Main Office

Fax: 206/246-1914

206/433-5438 Sea-Tac Airport Center

206/982-1100 McChord AFB Center

Krista Cossalter Sandberg, Executive Director

Email: usopsa1@aol.com

Volunteers and Donations Needed for Fort Lewis Red Cross Canteens

Anyone with post identification wishing to volunteer at the two Fort Lewis Red Cross stations can contact Stephanie Davison at 253-967-4288.

Items needed at the canteen include:

Small bottled water
Juice drinks
Cans or plastic liters of sodas
Coffee
Hot chocolate packets
Spiced cider packets
Individual tea packets
Mints, candy, gum
Beef jerky
Dry coffee creamer
Sugar, sweetener packets
Lunch-size chips
Cookies (homemade and store bought)
Candy bars (snack size)
Granola bars
Fruit (apples, oranges, bananas)
Napkins
Tissue
Coffee stirrers
Plastic spoons
Paper cups
Baggies (plastic bags for packing food items)
All food items must be individually sealed or packaged, either by the manufacturer or in small sandwich bags.

Drop-off points

The two Fort Lewis American Red Cross stations – Waller Hall and Madigan Army Medical Center

The Fort Lewis Family Resource Center

The three Fort Lewis Federal Community Credit Unions – Lacey, Spanaway and Lakewood

The Fort Lewis Judge Advocate General Office

The Puyallup United Methodist Church – 1919 West Pioneer in Puyallup

Washington State Veterans Homes

Wilson High School Musicians Honor Those Who Serve



Jazz ensemble performs *Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy* during Feb. 25 benefit concert raising \$2,200 for the Soldiers Home.

Each spring, Wilson High School choir raises money for upcoming trips by doing a fundraising performance.

This year, the fundraising became a lesson in selfless patriotism, as the Concert Choir, Center State Jazz Choir, Symphonic and Jazz bands, along with oral student presentations honored the men and women serving in the armed forces.

"This was the most amazing concert I have experienced in my 22 years as a music teacher," said Wilson's choir director Wendy Shepherd.

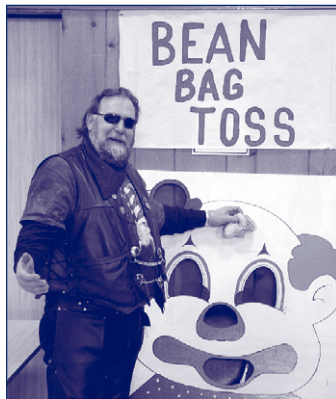
Shepherd, along with band director Daniel Kexel provided the leadership that culminated in "My America" presented Feb. 25 in the Wilson High School auditorium.

"Each student was given an assignment to finish the sentence 'My America is'" said Shepherd. "Then, the answers were put on posters and displayed throughout the halls for those in attendance at the concert to see."

The benefit concert raised approximately \$2,200.00 to be donated to the Washington Soldiers Home and Colony in Orting to help repair the chapel roof.



"These teenage Wilson High School students showed us that patriotism is still 'cool,' and that learning about America's past military history is necessary in order to form educated opinions today about Iraq or terrorism." Nancy Keay, Tacoma – letter submitted to TNT Applause 3-6-03.



Reno Days "Great Day" for Volunteers and Residents

Nearly 40 members of The Tacoma Washington Harley Owners Group (HOG), rode into Orting the morning of March 1, to serve as volunteers for the Soldiers Home annual Reno Days in Chilson Hall.

In addition to manning the various gaming tables, the group spent invaluable quality time with residents, visiting, escorting them to and from the casino and assisting them at the game tables.

The Tacoma HOGS plan numerous rides each year for charity runs and community outreach, and their members have been an important part of past Fishing Derby's and other events at the Soldiers Home.

In addition to the photos seen here, additional photos can be viewed at www.tacomahog.com/startpage.htm

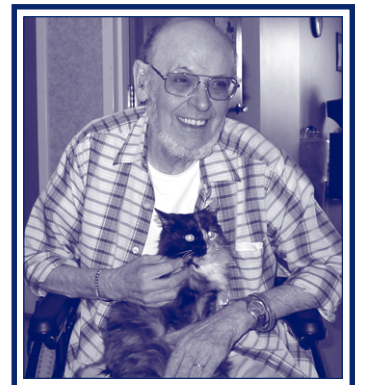


Newest Addition to Spokane Veterans Home Family

Meet Patches, the newest family member at the Spokane Veterans Home.

Her name was democratically selected after twenty names were submitted by staff, families and residents to the Resident Council. The Council narrowed the list down to three (Patches, Liberty and Tigger), which were then put to a vote by residents.

Resident Ken Glaspey submitted the winning name, Mr. Stratton is pictured here with Patches.



Valentine's Day Perfect Time to Salute Veterans

Each year, the week of Feb. 14 is proclaimed National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week in an effort to bring awareness of hospitalized veterans to local communities.

As part of this year's Salute, the Spokane Veterans Home held a Valentine's Day party for residents. The VFW Aux. brought in ice cream and toppings and the Cheney VFW hired a barbershop quartet for entertainment.

"National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week is a great time to honor and thank our Veterans who are cared for in VA medical centers, outpatient clinics and nursing homes," said WDVA director John M. King.

"It is also an opportunity for community organizations to explore the numerous volunteer programs available."

If you would like to find out what volunteer opportunities are available at the State Veterans Homes, contact:

Spokane Veterans Home – Spokane
Shane Price – 509-344-5779

Washington Veterans Home – Retsil
Catherine Shaw – 360-895-4376

Washington Soldiers Home – Orting
Lynn Zemke – 360-893-4511



Washington State Veterans Homes

ORIN “PETE” PETERSON TURNS 103



Spokane Veterans Home resident Pete Peterson celebrated his 103rd birthday with a special celebration on Feb. 27. A veteran of WWI and WWII, Pete has led a very interesting life. Born in Blackriver Falls, Wisconsin, Pete was the 5th child of 10 and is the only member of his family still living. Drafted into the army in 1919, he served in the 6th Division Headquarters Troop and was later transferred to the 12th Infantry Brigade. After Pete was discharged in 1922, he traveled and worked as a “jack-of-all trades” going from town-to-town and state-to-state doing odd jobs. When he got tired of being in one place he would move to a different town or state and get another job and work until it was time to move on.

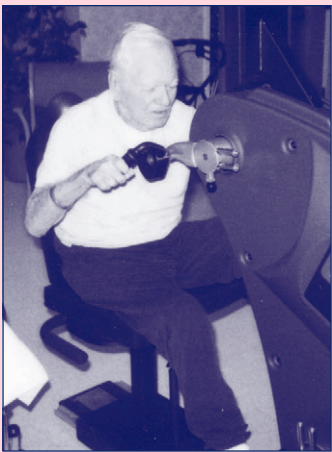
“People referred to people like me as “Rubber Bums”, said Pete.

In 1942, at the age of 42, he was drafted back into the Army to serve in WWII, but only for 6 months. At that time, men were drafted up to the age of 45, until the military decided 45 was too old and changed the draft age to 37.

When Pete was discharged from the Army he went back to his previous wandering lifestyle, except for the 3 years he owned a chicken ranch in Sacramento.

Pete has always loved children and they have always had the same affection for him. Pete never married, but he does have a foster daughter Carol.

When asked what he contributes his long life to, Pete stated “My life style and exercise”. Pete quit traveling in 1998 at the age of 98.



Farewell to the Old, Welcoming the New

Residents, staff and guests became a part of history on Feb. 6, 2003, during the nostalgic finale in the Retsil auditorium.

The last public event to ever be held in the Retsil auditorium wasn’t even a glimmer when WDVA employee Susan Ackers told friend and neighbor Carol Menefee about her work as an RN at Retsil. But when Menefee, an accomplished musician, discovered her planned visit to entertain the residents at Retsil was to be the last event in Building 13, she quickly pulled together a musical extravaganza to honor the occasion.



The “Kitsap Chordsmen” entertained residents and staff during the final auditorium program.

Entertainment by the “Kitsap Chordsmen” and “The Social Security Seven”, provided those in attendance the opportunity to stroll down memory lane, enjoy the companionship of friends and family, and say farewell to the old, as they get ready to welcome the new. Retsil will be commissioning approximately 260 *Sidewalk Supervisors* to oversee construction.



Retsil resident Earl Constant (left) joined “The Social Security Seven” during a final performance in the building 13 auditorium on Feb. 6. Earl was thrilled and surprised to have his daughters, granddaughters and great-granddaughters travel from Burien and Seattle to watch him play bass guitar during the historic event.

A Bit of History...about the Retsil Auditorium

Construction began in 1936 on a building to house an assembly hall or auditorium, a main dining hall, a bakery, a kitchen, refrigeration rooms, a chapel, and a post exchange. This new building was designed to be beautiful as well as functional. Unlike the earlier buildings, which had been built of wood, this new building was constructed in brick and was built to last for many years.

The dedication of this grand building was held May 7, 1939. It was quite a formal affair, attended by the Governor of the State of Washington, and featured drum and bugle corps, colorful bands, and quartets. A reception was held in the evening, followed by dancing. This was one of the most spectacular affairs ever staged at the Home. The Grand March displayed costumes representing all wars, worn by the members and guests. Minuets, Virginia Reels, and other dances of bygone eras were enjoyed by the large crowd in attendance.



Help Name the Construction Project

Dear Veteran's Community,

Months of careful planning have brought us to the much anticipated start of construction on the 240-bed nursing facility at the Washington Veterans Home. Every detail has been scrutinized by a team of architects, engineers, construction experts and budget planners. But, as with any project, there is always an item that needs to be finished. This time it's the project's name!

Every great project has an equally inspiring name and this one should be no different! So, we look to you – the Veteran's of Washington State – and ask for your assistance in *Naming the Construction Project*.

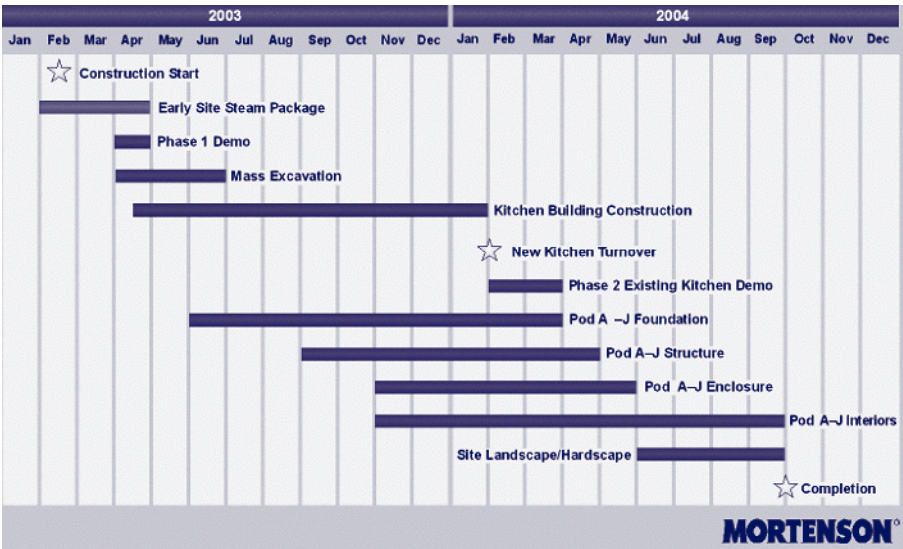
This is the most significant construction project the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs has seen in decades, and is the single largest grant ever provided by the U.S. DVA for one project.

Your only guidance is to use no more than 10 words in the name. The name will also be used for future efforts to raise funds for campus enhancements, such as garden benches, memorial gardens etc, so get those creative juices flowing! You can send your suggestions in any one of the following ways:

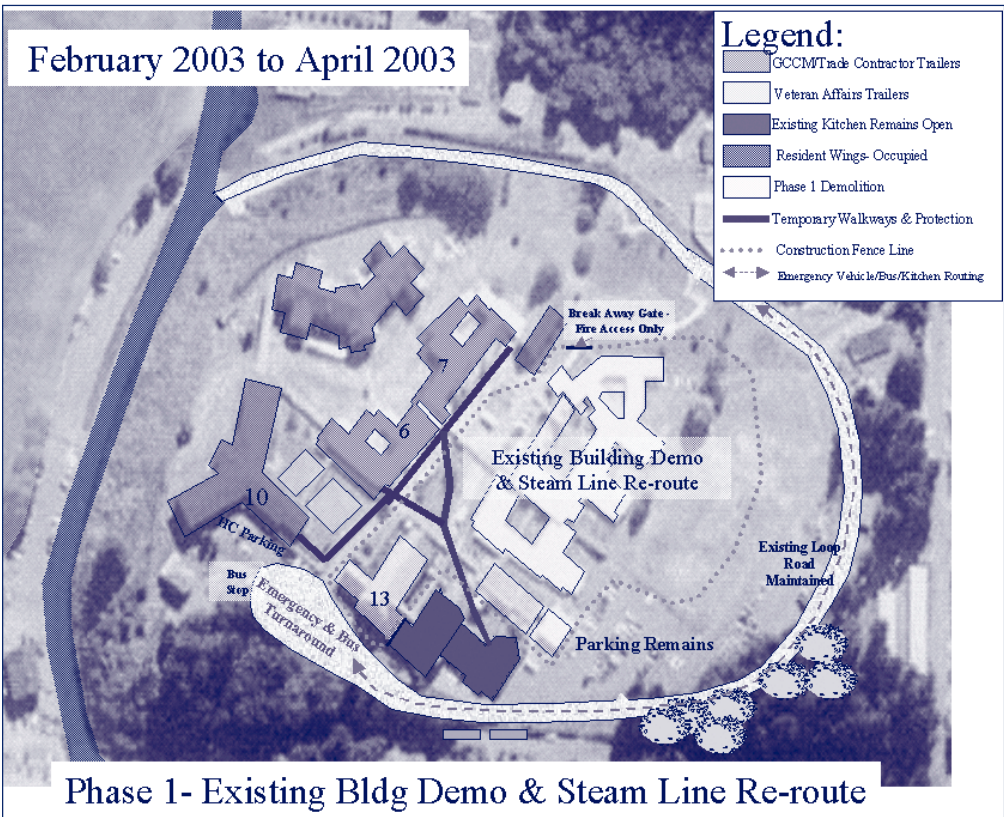
e-mail: heidia@dva.wa.gov
call: (360) 725-2154

mail: WDVA – Heidi Audette
PO Box 41150
Olympia, WA 98504

Construction Timeline



Retsil staff and residents were recently given a briefing on the construction timeline and boundaries by Mortenson, NBBJ and Superintendent John Lee. Rerouting the steam line is the first phase scheduled to begin any day.



The portables are in place between Bldgs. 10 and 7, for the Administration and Activities departments temporary quarters. Then demolition of Bldgs 1-5, and the Activity Bldg. will begin.

Check our web site
(www.dva.wa.gov) for
information on the upcoming
Ground Breaking Ceremony!

Straight Street Talk

With the Washington Veterans Home Residents

What do you think about the construction and changes taking place here at Retsil?



"It's good. We should have had it long ago."

Ray Church



"I hate to see the auditorium and dining room torn down, they're so beautiful. But, more and more people need nursing care and I'm sure glad I'm here."

Helen Osterhoudt



"I think it's a good idea. It should have been done a long time ago though, instead of talking about it for so long."

John Comas



"Don't pay much attention to it."

Charles Kruse



"We'll be Sidewalk Superintendents. I'm looking forward to it. It'll be something to do."

Rich Oseth

In The Spotlight

"Serving Those Who Have Served" takes on new meaning when the service provider and recipient share a similar background. At the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, the number of employees who are veterans ranks high, providing a personal connection with clients not always achieved in other agencies. In an effort to introduce these dedicated employees, WDVA will highlight a different veteran/employee each issue.



Quindola Crowley, Psy
Social Work Program
Manager

Having already served a total of 22 years active and reserve duty, Major Quindola Crowley is back on active duty at Fort Lewis.

Major Crowley, Retsil's Psychiatric Social Work program manager, has been recalled

to serve in the 364th Dt Tm 1st Bn Aug Ts Cscss unit, where her responsibilities include preparing, training and validating that troops are mission ready. In other words, based on the assessment of Major Crowley and others in her unit, those being deployed through this unit have the skills and tools to do their job and come back.

With only four days to prepare, Crowley has been moving at a fast pace with little down time since last month, working 12-14

hour days, six days a week. The bright note is she'll be staying at Fort Lewis, and not deploying elsewhere.

"My baby is not doing good," said Crowley, speaking of her seven year old son Alex. "He's asleep when I leave and asleep when I get home, so he doesn't understand I'm still here. He wants me to become a teacher so he can see me every day."

Her other two children, age 19 and 16, along with her husband, are doing fine.

When asked if she needed anything or had any messages to pass along Crowley said, "I sure miss the residents and staff."

"More importantly, please remember to be supportive of those serving. They are doing their job and don't have a choice whether they are deployed or not."

Also recalled to active duty is CNA Richard Preston, who also works at Retsil.

A cumulative roster of all National Guard and Reserve units currently on active duty can be found at www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2003/d20030312ngr.pdf.

Touris Transfers to Orting

Christine Touris has accepted a rotational assignment at the Washington Soldiers Home in Orting.



Touris has worked with WDVA for the past two years as the agency's Quality and Strategic Planning Manager.

During this time of budget crisis, the Management Team again looked for ways to fill a critical position without incurring additional costs. To accomplish this goal, Touris will assume the responsibilities of Associate Superintendent at Orting (a position left vacant when Vanessa Gaston resigned) while maintaining many of her duties as the Quality and Strategic Planning Manager.

Touris' work as the Quality and Strategic Planning Manager has been instrumental in moving WDVA forward on several projects critical to our future success. She will remain an active part of future strategic planning for WDVA as we continue to move through these difficult economic times.

Homeland Preparedness

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has launched a new website, www.ready.gov/. At this site, the public will be able to obtain information on the best ways to protect themselves and their families against terrorism. Items such as:

- Making a Kit
- Making a Plan
- Becoming Informed
- Dealing with Biological Threats
- Chemical Threat
- Explosions
- Nuclear Blast
- Understanding Radiation Threat

The public is encouraged to visit www.ready.gov/ or to call 1-800-BE-READY to learn more and why **Preparing Makes Sense**.

KOREAN WAR ARMISTICE COMMEMORATION

The Washington Statewide Ceremony to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War Armistice will be held at Fort Lewis on Sunday afternoon, July 27, 2003. Beginning at 3 PM, the ceremony will be held on Watkins Field, the Fort Lewis Main Post parade field. A reception, hosted by AUSA, will follow in the Cascade Community Club (former Officers' Club). The public is invited to attend.

Co-hosts for the Armistice Commemoration Ceremony are the Governor of the State of Washington and the Commanding General, I Corps and Fort Lewis. The ceremony will include honors to Korean War veterans of all United States and United Nations Services; recognition of the 22 United Nations member countries that supplied ground, air, and naval forces and medical units to the United Nations Command; special recognition to the fallen and MIA from Washington State; and Retreat. The I Corps Band, a Korean community choir

and the Gospel Outreach Choir of Olympia will provide music.

Veterans of all wars, their family members and friends are specifically invited to attend. Veterans, wear your ribbons and medals. You earned them.

Immediately following the Ceremony until 7 PM, a Reception will take place in the Cascade Community Club that is located a

short distance from the Ceremony site. Cost is \$5.00 per person. Children 10 and under are free. Please fill out the following ticket reservation form and mail with enclosed check to AUSA, PO Box 33181, Fort Lewis, WA 98433. For reservations received by July 19, tickets will be sent by mail. Other tickets will be available at On Call located at the Main entrance to the Cascade Community Club.

KOREAN WAR ARMISTICE COMMEMORATION RECEPTION TICKETS

July 27, 2003, Cascade Community Club, Ceremony closing to 7 PM.

Number attending ____ at \$5 each = Total \$ ____

Please make checks payable to AUSA

Mail to: AUSA, PO Box 33181, Fort Lewis, WA 98433

Mail tickets to: Name _____ Telephone _____

Street/PO Box _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

HATS OFF!

First, Agnes Rodli (left) wrote a poem after seeing a patriotic bumper sticker, and then enlisted the help of Marie Olson (right)

to help her cut and stamp the cards that were printed with the poem.

Next, Agnes spent time at the fair in Monroe last fall handing these out to veterans and telling them thank you.

Then, they saw Kristi O'Harran's article in the Everett Herald on Feb. 11, about visiting our state veterans homes for National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week. So, they contacted WDVA to find out how they could get their cards to the residents. All 600 of them.

Now, they plan to deliver them to veterans at the VA Puget Sound Health Care System.

If you would like a card, or know of anyone you'd like to have one sent to, send a request to colleen@dva.wa.gov or WDVA, PO Box 41150, Olympia WA 98504-1150, and we will forward the request to Agnes and Marie.

Or, feel free to cut or copy from here. Agnes has given permission to do so, as long as the poem is not used for profit.



The Bumper Sticker Said:

*"If you love your freedom,
say Thank You to a Vet."
And suddenly I realized
I hadn't done it yet!*

So Thank You for lonely nights,
for days you sweated through,
for battles won (and some lost)--
misunderstandings, too.

If in service or retired,
wherever you may be,
know without a single doubt
God cares--
and so do we.

(Agnes Rodli) ©

Thurston County Veterans Honor Active Duty Military Families

The Blue Star Banner Committee of Thurston County is honoring the men and women of Thurston county who are currently deployed, or who will be deployed in support of the war on terrorism, by providing their families with Blue Star Banners.

During WWI and WWII, red-bordered banners adorned with a blue star on a field of white hung in windows of homes that had family members serving in our armed forces, as a way of paying tribute to the men and women who were serving and protecting our country with their lives.

Recently, The Olympia Elks Lodge 186, and American Legion Posts 3 from Olympia, 94 from Lacey and 166 from Tumwater, teamed up to provide Blue Star Banners free to the families of Thurston County residents serving on active duty.

For those families who have loved ones currently deployed, or soon to be deployed, wishing to receive one of these banners in an upcoming ceremony to be held Flag Day (June 14), please fill out the application below and send to:

BLUE STAR BANNER COMMITTEE OF THURSTON COUNTY
BPOE #186
1818 EAST 4TH ST
OLYMPIA WA 98506

If families do not wish to participate in the Flag Day ceremony, a Blue Star Banner can be purchased through the following website: www.emblem.legion.org/americanlegn/productr.asp
For additional information, call (360) 753-0186



The committee is seeking Corporate Sponsors (\$250.00 or more) to assist with this program, and will present all corporate donors with the large banner pictured here. Jim Monk, a veteran and advocate on the committee, holds the Blue Star Banner to be presented to families of deployed military personnel.

Blue Star Banner Organization Information needed from Applicants

Name of Applicant _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Name of active service man/woman _____ Rank _____

Branch of Service _____ Current base/ship _____

Relation to Applicant _____